

INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State*

14 VIETS

(34)

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Action

FE VV MJA620JIA420
RR RUEHC
Info DE RUMJIR 4908 2441445
SS ZNY CCCCC
G R 011159Z AUG 66
SP FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
SAH TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC
L INFO RUHLHQ/CINCPAC
H ZEN/AMCONSUL HUE
SAL ZEN/AMCONSUL DANANG
EUR STATE GRNC
IO BT
P CONFIDENTIAL SAIGON 4908
USIA SEPT 01.

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EXCISE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY *Jim J. 6* DATE *10/6/81*
PORTIONS DELETED AS INDICATED

NSC SUBJ: CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTION IN BINH DINH

INR
CIA 1. ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN BINH DINH IN FULL GEAR. FOLLOWING
NSA UNUSUALLY COMPLETE PREPARATIONS. CANDIDATES MADE FIRST OF 19
DOD SCHEDULED SPEAKING APPEARANCES ON AUG 28 IN PROGRAM WHICH WILL
NIC TAKE THEM TO EACH OF PROVINCE'S EIGHT DISTRICTS AND SEVERAL
ACDA LOCATIONS IN QUI NHON. EACH OF FOUR LISTS ALSO ALLOWED DAILY FIVE-
AID MINUTE STUNT ON QUI NHON RADIO. ELECTION WELL PUBLICIZED, PROVING
BSR THAT SUFFICIENT GVN PRESSURE CAN OVERCOME WHAT WAS PRESUMED TO BE
IMMUTABLE VIS INCAPACITY. IN PROCESS NOT SEEN IN OTHER PROVINCES,
BINH DINH ORGANIZED SERIES OF MOCK ELECTIONS LAST WEEK, TO ACQUAINT
PEOPLE WITH VOTING PROCEDURES AND REMIND THEM OF THEIR DUTY
ON SEPTEMBER 11.

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2. PROVINCE CHIEF AND OTHER PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES BELIEVE VOTER
TURNOUT WILL BE GOOD, DESPITE VC THREAT AND BUDDHIST OPPOSITION.

FEARS THAT 30-40 PCT
OF QUI NHON VOTERS MAY STAY AWAY FROM POLLS, DUE TO STRENGTH OF UBA
ORGANIZATION IN CITY. HOWEVER, HE BELIEVES VOTE WILL BE MUCH
HEAVIER IN DISTRICTS. IN HAMLETS ACCESSIBLE TO VC PRESSURE, VOTER
CARDS WILL BE ISSUED TO INTERFAMILY CHIEFS ON ELECTION DAY. CHIEFS
WILL DISTRIBUTE CARDS AND PERSONALLY LEAD VOTERS TO POLLS. WITH
THIS KIND OF TIGHT ORGANIZATION, [] CONFIDENT THAT PROVINCE-
WIDE TURNOUT WILL MORE THAN TAKE UP SLACK CAUSED BY BUDDHIST
ACTIVITY IN QUI NHON.

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3. NUMBER OF RESIDENTS OF HAMLETS ON OUTER EDGES OF PACIFICATION PERIMETER, WHERE TD CADRE ONLY RECENTLY ARRIVED, HAVE NOT BEEN REGISTERED. THERE ALSO SOME CATHOLICS (MOSTLY REFUGEES) IN QUI NHON WHO NOT REGISTERED, [] BECAUSE THEY FAILED TO CHECK VOTING LISTS AND RECTIFY MISTAKE IN TIME. AMONG LAGGARDS WAS CATHOLIC BISHOP OF QUI NHON, WHO COMPLAINED (VIA VIET-NAM PRESS) THAT HIS NAME NOT ON FINAL LIST. INTENDS ALLOW BISHOP TO VOTE AND CONSIDERS HIS COMPLAINT ENCOURAGING

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SIGN OF CATHOLIC INTEREST IN ELECTION. DESPITE THESE OMISSIONS, TOTAL REGISTRANTS NUMBER 199,188 AS OPPOSED TO ONLY 116,778 FOR 1965 ELECTION.

4. FOUR OF ORIGINAL EIGHT LISTS WITHDREW; FOUR LISTS REMAIN TO COMPETE FOR BINH DINH'S THREE PLACES IN ASSEMBLY. TWO ARE ENTIRELY ARVN, ONE IS CATHOLIC AND ONE IS LED BY VNQDD.

5. STRONGEST CONTENDER APPEARS TO BE LIST OF DR. NGO VAN NHAM, MAJOR IN MEDICAL CORPS (SEE A-45, ENCLOSURE #1, JULY 27, 1966). NHAM WELL KNOWN IN QUI NHON, WHERE HE HAS PRIVATE CLINIC AND IS HEAD OF PROVINCIAL HEALTH SERVICE. HE IS BRIGHT, HIGHLY IMPRESSIVE MAN, AND IS RUNNING IMAGINATIVE CAMPAIGN. FOR EXAMPLE, HE DISTRIBUTES QUESTIONNAIRE DURING SPEECH-MAKING STOPS ASKING PEOPLE TO INDICATE WHAT FORM FUTURE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE AND WHETHER CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY SHOULD TRANSFORM ITSELF INTO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. PEOPLE ARE ASKED TO MAIL COMPLETED FORM TO HIS ADDRESS TO QUI NHON (SEVERAL FORMS HAD ALREADY ARRIVED). NHAM REALIZES PEASANTS NOT LIKELY TO HAVE MUCH TO SAY ABOUT GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION, BUT ASSUMES, PROBABLY CORRECTLY, THAT THEY WILL APPRECIATE HAVING BEEN ASKED. NHAM PERSONALLY FAVORS CONSTITUTION ON KOREAN MODEL, WHICH GIVES STRONG EXECUTIVE BUT ALSO ALLOWS MEANINGFUL NATIONAL

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ASSEMBLY. (HE HAS DISCUSSED CONSTITUTION WITH KOREAN OFFICERS IN QUI NHON, WHO HAVE GIVEN HIM LITERATURE ON SUBJECT.)

6. WHILE IT UNLIKELY THAT ANY LIST WILL WIN TWO SEATS, NHAM'S PROBABLY HAS BEST CHANCE. HIS NUMBER TWO IS NGUYEN DUC LINH,

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ARVN CAPTAIN OF VNQDD PERSUASION. ^{b-1} CONSIDERS LINH REAL POLITICIAN OF LIST, AND POWER BEHIND IT. HOWEVER, NHAM APPEARS TO BE HIS OWN MAN, AND FAIR POLITICIAN TO BOOT.

7. SECOND ARVN LIST IS LED BY CAPTAIN PHAN VAN PHU, WHO SINCE HIS ARRIVAL FROM SAIGON FOUR MONTHS AGO HAS BEEN OFFICER OF PROVINCIAL RURAL CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE. HIS LIST APPROPRIATELY ENTITLED "CONSTRUCTION". ACCORDING TO ONE OF OPPOSITION CANDIDATES, CONNECTION BETWEEN PHU CAMPAIGN AND RD IS MORE THAN NOMINAL -- HE ALLEGES THAT RD CADRE ARE ACTIVELY WORKING FOR PHU IN FIELD. MORE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT PHU THAN ABOUT NHAM, POINTING OUT THAT PHU EDUCATED IN LAW AND HAS TWO YOUNG PROFESSORS-TURNED-OFFICERS ON HIS LIST. BUT HE THOUGHT BOTH WOULD WIN, NHAM RUNNING STRONGEST IN QUI NHON, PHU IN DISTRICTS. PHU FAVORS FRENCH SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT, FEATURING STRONG EXECUTIVE BUT WITH ADEQUATE SEPARATION OF POWERS.

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8. CATHOLIC LIST, ENTITLED "INDEPENDENCE", IS HEADED BY PHAN CHAU TUAN, 46 YEAR OLD NATIVE OF BINH DINH. LIST INCLUDES NGUYEN VAN CONG, ONLY CATHOLIC MEMBER OF PROVINCIAL COUNCIL (FINISHED 11TH IN 1965 ELECTION), AND NGUYEN THE VY, A FORMER PAT AND RD CADRE LEADER. (TUAN WAS CANDIDATE WHO COMPLAINED OF CAPTAIN PHU'S USE OF RD CADRE FOR CAMPAIGN.) TUAN'S STRONG SUIT SHOULD BE CATHOLIC VOTE, AS WELL AS FACT THAT HE IS NATIVE OF BINH DINH, AND PERHAPS BETTER KNOWN TO PEOPLE THAN NHAM AND PHU. HOWEVER, ^{b-1} SAID THAT TUAN'S ^{ed} IS NOT "OFFICIAL" CATHOLIC LIST AND WILL NOT NECESSARILY RECEIVE UNANIMOUS SUPPORT OF CATHOLICS. ACCORDING TO ⁷ ALL FOUR LISTS ARE ACCEPTABLE TO CATHOLICS.

9. LUONG THUONG HAI, 50, HEADS FOURTH LIST. HAI IS BUDDHIST AND VNQDD MEMBER, OF NGUYEN TUONG TAM FACTION. LIKE TUAN, HAI IS NATIVE OF BINH DINH. HIS VNQDD AFFILIATION NOT LIKELY TO COUNT FOR MUCH IN VIEW OF PARTY'S FACTIONALISM AND SMALL SIZE IN BINH DINH. (HAI DOES APPEAR TO BE ON GOOD TERMS WITH NGUYEN HUU THOI, LEADER OF KY DANG BO IN PROVINCE, WHO INTRODUCED HIM TO EMBOFF.) HAI'S BEST CHANCE OF BEATING TUAN FOR THIRD SEAT PROBABLY LIES IN HIS BUDDHISM, WHICH MIGHT CAUSE BUDDHIST VOTERS TO FIND HIM PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE TO CATHOLIC OR MILITARY CANDIDATES. HAI IS SOMETHING OF A DEMAGOGUE, AND SEEMS LEAST IMPRESSIVE OF FOUR LIST LEADERS.

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